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APPARATUS

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RESPONSE

Approved for entry
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

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Sir:

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated June 25, 2002. As of this Response, pending claims 1-43 read as follows:

1. An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:
a pair of extendable elongate shells, the extendable elongate shells having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity, the pair of extendable elongate shells located adjacent to each other, and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each extendable elongate shell; and
a spacing structure, the pair of extendable elongate shells each secured by the spacing structure, the spacing structure effective to maintain the pair of extendable elongate shells in predetermined relation to each other, proximate the spacing structure.
2. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein the spacing structure comprises a first template, the first template comprising a plurality of interior surfaces, the interior surfaces defining a plurality of apertures that extend through the first template, each extendable elongate shell passing through one of the apertures of the first template.

3. (Amended) The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 2 wherein the spacing structure further comprises a second template, the second template comprising one or more interior surfaces, the one or more interior surfaces defining at least one aperture that extends through the second template, one of the extendable elongate shells passing through the aperture of the second template.

4. (Amended) The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the wall comprising interior surfaces that define a plurality of recesses in the wall or a plurality of apertures through the wall, the spacing structure comprising the recesses or the apertures of the wall, each extendable elongate shell passing through the apertures of the wall or positioned in the recesses of the wall.

5. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the spacing structure comprising a plurality of sockets, the sockets attached to the wall of the container, and the extendable elongate shells positioned in the socket.

6. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the wall having a proximal end and a distal end and the wall having an interior surface, the spacing structure either in contact with the proximal end of the wall, in contact with the interior surface of the wall, or in contact with both the proximal end of the wall and the interior surface of the wall.

7. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein at least one of the extendable elongate shells has a longitudinal axis and comprises a female elongate shell and a male elongate shell that is positioned within the female elongate shell, the male elongate shell selectively movable along the longitudinal axis relative to the female elongate shell or the female elongate shell selectively movable along the longitudinal axis relative to the male elongate shell.

8. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 7 wherein the female elongate shell and the male elongate shell are each tubes.

9. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 7 wherein the female elongate shell and the male elongate shell each have a cross-sectional shape, the cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of cylindrical, square, rectangular, triangular, and elliptical cross-sectional shapes.

10. (Amended) An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

- a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity, at least one of the elongate cavities having a length that is adequate to accept a portion of an ice fishing rod within the at least one elongate cavity, the ice fishing rod having a tip and a handle, a reel or a line windup attached to the ice fishing rod proximate the handle, the portion of the ice fishing rod extending from a tip of the ice fishing rod to the reel or line windup;
- a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component; and
- a second spacing component, at least one of the elongate shells secured by the second spacing component, the second spacing component spaced apart from the first spacing component.

11. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 wherein:

- the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the wall having a proximal end and a distal end and the wall having an interior surface; and
- the first spacing component is either in contact with the proximal end of the wall, in contact with the interior surface of the wall, or in contact with both the proximal end of the wall and the interior surface of the wall.

12. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 11 wherein:
the second spacing component is in contact with the interior surface of the wall.
13. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 wherein the first spacing component comprises a template, the template comprising a plurality of interior surfaces, the interior surfaces defining a plurality of apertures that extend through the template, each elongate shell passing through one of the apertures of the template.
14. (Amended) The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the wall comprising one or more interior surfaces that define a recess in the wall or an aperture through the wall, the second spacing component comprising the recess or the aperture, one of the elongate shells passing through the aperture of the wall or positioned in the recess of the wall.
15. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the apparatus further comprising a socket, the socket attached to the wall of the container, and one of the elongate shells positioned in the socket.
16. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 wherein the elongate shells each have a longitudinal axis, a length of at least one of the elongate shells selectively and reversibly adjustable along the longitudinal axis of the at least one elongate shell.
17. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 wherein the elongate shells each have a cross-sectional shape, the cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of cylindrical, square, rectangular, triangular, elliptical, and any of these cross-sectional shapes in any combination.

18. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 10 in which a pair of the elongate shells are located adjacent to each other and wherein:

the first spacing component is effective to keep the adjacent pair of elongate shells in predetermined relation to each other, proximate the first spacing component; or
the second spacing component is effective to keep the adjacent pair of elongate shells in predetermined relation to each other, proximate the second spacing component.

19. An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

a plurality of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity, and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavities of the elongate shells;

a spacing structure, the elongate shells secured by the spacing structure,, the spacing structure effective to maintain two or more of the elongate shells in predetermined relation to each other, proximate the spacing structure; and

wherein at least two of the elongate shells are capable of serving as legs that will stably support the apparatus on a surface when the at least two elongate shells are positioned in contact with the surface, the spacing structure effective to prevent slippage of the at least two elongate shells with respect to the spacing structure.

20. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 19 wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the wall having a proximal end and a distal end and the wall having an interior surface, the spacing structure either in contact with the proximal end of the wall, in contact with the interior surface of the wall, or in contact with both the proximal end of the wall and the interior surface of the wall.

21. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 19 wherein the elongate shells each have a longitudinal axis, a length of at least one of the elongate shells selectively and reversibly adjustable along the longitudinal axis of the at least one elongate shell.

22. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 19 wherein the elongate shells each have a cross-sectional shape, the cross-sectional shape selected from the group consisting of cylindrical, square, rectangular, triangular, elliptical, and any of these cross-sectional shapes in any combination.

23. An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:
a plurality of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity, and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavities of the elongate shells;
a spacing structure, the elongate shells secured by the spacing structure, the spacing structure effective to maintain at least two of the elongate shells in predetermined relation to each other, proximate the spacing structure; and
a plurality of legs that are capable of supporting the apparatus on a surface when the legs are positioned in contact with the surface, the plurality of legs attached to the spacing structure or to any of the elongate shells.

24. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein the pair of extendable elongate shells comprise:

a first extendable elongate shell having a first interior surface that defines a first elongate cavity, the first extendable elongate shell comprising a plurality of separable elongate shell components, each elongate shell component having an inner surface that defines an elongate cavity portion, the elongate cavity portions of each adjacent elongate shell component in communication with each other and the elongate cavity portions collectively forming the first elongate cavity; and
a second extendable elongate shell having a second interior surface that defines a second elongate cavity.

25. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein each elongate cavity is selectively and reversibly capable of being lengthened or shortened.

26. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein the pair of extendable elongate shells are each capable of simultaneously holding different ice fishing tackle items.

27. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 26 wherein the different ice fishing tackle items are pre-rigged ice fishing rods, pre-rigged ice-fishing tip-ups, or a pre-rigged ice fishing rod and a pre-rigged ice-fishing tip-up, the ice fishing storage apparatus effective for preventing the different ice fishing tackle items from becoming entangled with each other when held within the extendable elongate shells.

28. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein each extendable elongate shell comprises an adjustable stop, the adjustable stops effective to hold each extendable elongate shell at a selected level of extension.

29. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 1 wherein each extendable elongate shell has a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of each extendable elongate shell having a rounded surface that is adequate to minimize abrasion of any fishing line that rests against the proximal end of any extendable elongate shell.

30. An ice fishing rod storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:
a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing rods capable of being individually positioned within the elongate cavities of the different elongate shells;
a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component; and
a second spacing component, at least one of the elongate shells secured by the second spacing component, the second spacing component spaced apart from the first spacing component.

31. The ice fishing rod storage apparatus of claim 30 wherein the ice fishing rods are capable of being individually positioned within the elongate cavities of the different elongate shells with tips of the rods within the elongate cavities and with either the reels or line windups of the ice fishing rods or fishing line extending from the reels or line windups in contact with the elongate shells.

32. An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

- a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each elongate shell;

- a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component; and

- a second spacing component, at least one of the elongate shells secured by the second spacing component, the second spacing component spaced apart from the first spacing component;

- wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the wall comprising a one or more interior surfaces that define a recess in the wall or an aperture through the wall, the second spacing component comprising the recess or the aperture, one of the elongate shells passing through the aperture of the wall or positioned in the recess of the wall.

33. An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

- a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each elongate shell;

- a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component; and

- a second spacing component, at least one of the elongate shells secured by the second spacing component, the second spacing component spaced apart from the first spacing component;

wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a wall, the apparatus further comprising a socket, the socket attached to the wall of the container, and one of the elongate shells positioned in the socket.

34. An ice fishing tackle storage system, the ice fishing tackle storage system comprising an ice fishing storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

- a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each elongate shell; and

- a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component; and

- a first wall, the first wall attached to the first spacing component; and

- a container, the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus positioned in the container, the container having a second wall, the first wall and the second wall defining a chamber within the container, an ice fishing tip-up capable of being placed in the chamber.

35. The ice fishing tackle storage system of claim 34 wherein the ice-fishing tip-up is capable of being entirely within the chamber.

36. (Amended) An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

- a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each elongate shell; and

- a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component;

wherein each elongate shell has a proximal end and a distal end, the proximal end of each elongate shell having a rounded surface that is adequate to minimize abrasion of any fishing line that rests against the proximal end of any elongate shell.

37. An ice fishing tackle storage apparatus, the apparatus comprising:
- a pair of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each elongate shell; the elongate shells each having both a distal end and a proximal end;
 - a first spacing component, the pair of elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component, the first spacing component having a distal surface and a proximal surface; and
 - a second spacing component, at least one of the elongate shells secured by the second spacing component, the second spacing component spaced apart from the first spacing component;
- wherein the ice fishing tackle storage apparatus is positioned in a container, the container having a closed bottom end and an open upper end, the first spacing component positioned at the open upper end.
38. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 37, wherein the proximal end of at least one of the elongate shells is flush with the proximal surface of the first spacing component.
39. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 19 wherein the spacing structure is free of contact with the surface.
40. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 19 wherein the spacing structure comprises a template, the template comprising a plurality of interior surfaces, the interior surfaces defining a plurality of apertures that extend through the first template, at least one of the elongate shells passing through one of the apertures of the template.
41. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 23 wherein the spacing structure is free of contact with the surface.

42. The ice fishing tackle storage apparatus of claim 23 wherein the spacing structure comprises a template, the template comprising a plurality of interior surfaces, the interior surfaces defining a plurality of apertures that extend through the first template, at least one of the elongate shells passing through one of the apertures of the template.

43. A bucket assembly, the bucket assembly comprising:
a bucket, the bucket having a water-holding capacity of at least about three gallons and the bucket having a wall, the wall having a proximal end and a distal end and the wall having an interior surface;
a plurality of elongate shells, the elongate shells each having an interior surface that defines an elongate cavity and ice fishing tackle capable of being positioned within the elongate cavity of each elongate shell; and
a first spacing component, the elongate shells each secured by the first spacing component, the first spacing component in contact with the proximal end of the wall, in contact with the interior surface of the wall, or in contact with both the proximal end of the wall and the interior surface of the wall.

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated June 25, 2002. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-43. With this Response, no claims are amended; no claims are canceled; and no new claims are added. Upon entry of this Response the above-identified application will continue to include claims 1-43.

Examiner's Comments About the Drawings

In the Office Action, the Examiner acknowledged the proposed drawing corrections filed in response to the prior Office Action had been approved, but stated that a proper drawing correction was still required: